

## June 16, 2005: CONGRESSWOMAN ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON AT PRESS CONFERENCE CALLED BY CITIZENS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATEMENT OF CONGRESSWOMAN ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON AT PRESS CONFERENCE CALLED BY CITIZENS TO SAVE D.C. GUN SAFETY LAWS COALITION. Washington, DC—Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) and the Citizens to Save D.C. Gun Safety Laws Coalition held a news conference at Shaw Junior High School today to begin a new mobilization to stop the latest attack on the District's gun ban--the repeal bill introduced by Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), and Rep. Mark Souder (R-IN)--and to dedicate this year's Father's Day to the children killed by gunfire. School Superintendent Clifford Janey was the featured speaker along with the Co-chairs of the Coalition: Hannah Hawkins, Children of Mine Center; Marita Michael, mother of Devin Fowlkes, an Anacostia H. S. student shot to death; Rev. Lionel Edmonds, Washington Interfaith Network (WIN); Lillian Perdomo, Multicultural Community Services; Robert Peck, Greater Washington Board of Trade; Iris Toyer, Parents United for the D.C. Public Schools; and Joslyn Williams, Metropolitan Washington Council AFL-CIO.

Congresswoman Norton's full statement follows:

"For the second year in a row, the NRA is back with its bill to repeal D.C.'s gun safety laws, armed with hefty campaign contributions and 30-second ad threats to members of Congress. School Superintendent Clifford Janey and Citizens to Save D.C. Gun Safety Laws have come forward today, with a virtually unanimous city behind them, to rescue our gun safety laws, as they did last year, and determined to defeat this bill that would allow pawn shops and gun shops to sell assault weapons and sniper rifles in the capital of the United States. As Father's Day approaches on Sunday, these citizens, representatives of every sector in our city, have come heavily armed with their home rule determination to save the lives of our residents, especially our children. The city has worked too hard in this city to achieve our 20-year low in homicides to now allow a reversal with the introduction of guns in homes, in the workplace, and on any property a resident owns.

"When 97 percent of guns come from outside the city, we know that the gun violence our citizens suffer is imported-- with 60 percent of the guns from Maryland and from Virginia, the home state of Senator George Allen, one of the prime Senate sponsors of the bill. Does Senator Allen believe that his neighbors in D.C. or any big city will be safer if more guns are introduced? Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, another prime sponsor, from Texas-- where Dallas has had the second highest murder rate in the country for seven years running, and now has the highest crime rate in the United States-- has more urgent work to do at home than in D.C. Representative Mark Souder, the prime House sponsor, was censored by his hometown paper for violating self-determination after hitting rock bottom with his rationale for the bill that, "we didn't allow the District to have home rule on selling slaves either."

(MORE)"No member of Congress has a right to usurp our right to protect

guns to be carried in our streets, that could take the gun violence already here the next steps to make D.C. a free fire zone. No member of Congress has a right to put a specific provision in a bill barring the Council from taking any action to protect our residents from guns. No member of Congress can claim Second Amendment constitutional protection for the repeal of D.C. gun safety laws when these laws have been upheld by federal and local courts. No member of Congress has a rebuttal to the hard data that show that one in five police officers are killed by assault weapons and that more teens are killed by gunfire than by all diseases combined. And no co-sponsor of this bill has a response to the overwhelming national evidence that guns in the home rarely are used to thwart intruders and are almost always used to kill those closest to us. "We have come to a middle school today to dedicate this year's Father's Day to the 18 children who were killed by gunfire last year. No member of Congress will pay the price our resident and our children will pay if this bill passes. District residents have more reason to fear guns than to fear the terrorism that focuses the collective mind of the Congress. Let Congress be on notice that this bill would allow a person to own a weapon who might later to position himself against federal targets and visitors or to go to the roof of an office or an apartment building with his AK-47. Official Washington has as much to fear from the radical repeal in this bill as our residents." On Father's Day, we pledge ourselves to stop the carnage before it occurs, in the name of the children of the District of Columbia, including 9-year old Donte Manning, killed on 13 Street, NW in April; Mianni Goodine of Birney Place, SE, killed in January and Devin Fowlkes, shot and killed as he left Anacostia High School in October 2003."